

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated January 4, 2005, having a shortened statutory period set to expire April 4, 2005. Claims 1-25 are pending in the present application. Applicants have amended Claims *** and canceled Claims ***. No new matter has been entered by these amendments.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

On page 2 of the present Office Action, Claims 19-21 and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants have amended Claims 19-21 and 25 and believe that such amendments overcome the rejections under §112.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103

On page 2 of the present Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 11-13, 15-19, 22 and 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Fenton, et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,619,555). Further, on page 5 of the present Office Action, Claims 3, 9, 10 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Fenton* as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of *Gerszberg, et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,020,916). And further, on page 7 of the present Office Action, Claims 20, 21, 24 and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Fenton* as applied to Claim 1 above, and further in view of *Sammon, et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,563,914). Those rejections are respectfully traversed and reconsideration of the claims is requested.

With respect to independent Claim 1 in the present application, therein is recited, *inter alia*:

thereafter, automatically terminating participation in the electronic conference session for each terminal of the plurality of terminals assigned with the first identifier, in response to termination of the associated first class from participating in the electronic conference session.

The claim limitations in Claim 1 in the present application require that participation of the electronic conference session for a particular class of terminals is automatically terminated for a plurality of participants in the conference in response to the leader terminating that class of

participants. As noted by the Examiner in section 14 of the present Office Action, *Fenton* teaches terminating the electronic connection of a participant in the electronic conference. However, what *Fenton* teaches is that a user's participation in a conference is terminated by the act of the user hanging up the telephone and manually entering a command into a remote computer to indicate that only that individual user is leaving the conference. (see col. 5, lines 55-60). What *Fenton* fails to show or suggest is a methodology whereby an entire class of participants in the conference are automatically terminated or selectively terminated from the conference from among multiple classes of participants in the conference. *Fenton* fails to suggest in any manner a method of terminating participation in a conference for an entire class of conference participants, while continuing the conference for a different class. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that *Fenton* does not show or suggest the present invention as claimed in amended Claim 1 in the present application. Still further, neither *Fenton*, nor any other reference cited in the present record whether taken individually or in combination shows or suggests such an automated electronic conference session control of participation. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of independent Claim 1.

With regard to independent Claim 11 in the present application, therein is recited a system including a controller for managing an electronic conference session. Claim 11 recites:

a controller connected to the plurality of terminals that receives signals representing each user accessing the electronic conference, wherein the session controller assigns each user to a particular class from among a plurality of classes and performs a function to control an aspect of participation in the electronic conference for each user assigned to a selected class of the plurality of classes;

As recited, independent Claim 11 recites a system for terminating participation of a particular class of participants in an electronic conference, while continuing the conference for a second class of participants in the conference. As has been explained above, *Fenton* teaches terminating participation in a conference only for a single user, whereby the user hangs up a telephone and enters a command on a remote terminal to leave the conference. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that *Fenton* does not show or suggest the present invention as

claimed in independent Claim 11 of the present application and that the rejection of Claim 11 should be withdrawn.

With respect to independent Claims 18 and 22 in the present application, therein is recited the steps of, *inter alia*:

"terminating the teleconference for participants of a selected class, while continuing the teleconference for one or more other classes of the plurality of classes"

Independent Claims 18 and 22 recite termination of a teleconference for participants of a selected class, while continuing the teleconference for other classes participating in the conference. As has been explained above, *Fenton* only teaches terminating participation by a single user and not the termination of participation by a class of users. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that *Fenton* does not show or suggest the present invention as claimed in independent Claims 18 and 22 and that the rejection of those claims should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that neither *Fenton*, nor any other reference of record, shows or suggests participation in a conference by a class of participants in the conference. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 11, 18 and 22 are not anticipated by *Fenton* and that the rejection under §102 should be withdrawn. Further, with respect to the remaining pending claims, Applicants submit that for the reasons given above, those claims are not anticipated or suggested by *Fenton*, *Gertszberg*, *Sammons*, or any combination thereof, and that the rejection of those claims should also be withdrawn. Applicants believing that all rejections have been overcome, respectfully submit that the application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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